



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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KEEP BACTERIA OFF YOUR HOLIDAY GUEST LIST ***Safe Food-Handling Tips for Thanksgiving***

Thanksgiving is almost upon us and family and friends will come together to celebrate. Food safety is very important because large amounts of food are often prepared and served. Here are a few safety tips to prevent microscopic guests from joining your party:

- ❑ **PLAN:** Plan ahead. Decide how much food can be safely served. Take into account the cooking and refrigerator space. Thinking of defrosting a frozen turkey? Plan ahead for safe, slow thawing in the refrigerator. A large turkey requires at least 24 hours for every five pounds of weight.
- ❑ **CLEAN:** Wash your hands before and after handling food. Thoroughly rinse whole raw produce prior to use. Wash and sanitize the counters, cutting boards and equipment before and after preparing your holiday feast.
- ❑ **SEPARATE:** Keep produce separated from raw meat products. Place turkey onto a plate or in a pan at the bottom of the refrigerator to prevent juices from dripping onto other foods while defrosting in the refrigerator. When the bird is defrosted, it can remain refrigerated for one to two days before cooking. Use separate cutting boards for meat and fruits or vegetables.
- ❑ **COOK:** Cook turkey and stuffing to 165°F. Use a meat thermometer to ensure proper cooking temperatures are reached. The temperature of a whole turkey must reach 165°F in the innermost part of the thigh. The safest way to cook stuffing is to cook it separately from the bird. Germs can thrive in the stuffing ingredients if the stuffing is improperly cooked in the turkey. Leftovers should be reheated to 165°F before eating. Gravy should be reheated to a boil and leftovers, if heated, should be thoroughly reheated to 165° F.
- ❑ **CHILL:** Keep cold foods at 41°F or less. Check the temperature inside your refrigerator. If preparing foods ahead of time, refrigerate to minimize bacterial growth. Cut leftover turkey into small pieces. Refrigerate stuffing and turkey separately in shallow containers within two hours of cooking.

For more information, visit www.usda.gov or call the Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854.

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